

Autumn Exercise

ACS Hold Successful Drill and De-briefing

By Peter Smith (N7BYP)

On Saturday morning, November 16th, 2002, a drill was conducted by ACS. Objectives for the drill included checking communication links from community centers to the EOC, checking communication links between community centers, checking communication links among Sand Point ACS facility, community centers and the EOC, checking communication links between community centers and the state net, establishing contacts with SDART communications team members, checking accuracy and suitability of community center deployment maps, and practicing composing and sending messages.

During the drill, Alton Cuplin, N7LGL, Bill Dockstader W7LSK, Dave Gorsich KB7ZQS, and Mark Sheppard N7LYE manned the Communications and Warning Center at the Seattle Emergency Operations Center. The drill proceeded in four phases. In phases one and two, ACS personnel deployed to their assigned community centers and to Sand Point, then checked into the state emergency HF communications net and/or checked into the ACS emergency VHF radio net. In phases three and four, practice messages were sent and communications links among the community centers, Sand Point, and the EOC were tested.

After the exercise was completed the group convened at the Discovery Park's visitor center for a debriefing session. There, a useful discussion was held during which a number of concerns and issues were raised. These included suggestions for improved check-in procedures, the need for message form availability on the web and at the EOC, additional train-

ing in the use of the official message form, the need for additional practice in sending messages, and further testing and development of simplex operations. The consensus of the group was that priority should be given to additional practice in messaging. Another practice exercise focusing on messaging was tentatively scheduled for February.

Those who brought "go-kits" engaged in a show-and-tell to describe the contents of their kits. A brief discussion of items to be included in "ready" or "go" kits followed.

After the meeting everyone stayed to enjoy lunch and conversation. Special thanks go to Mark Sheppard N7LYE for bringing the fixings for a tasty meal of sandwiches, drinks, and desserts. Thanks also to everyone who took time on a rainy, windy Saturday morning to participate, including those who checked in: KD7PWX, KD7QKK, KN7A, W7DWC/KD7EEC, K7BDL, WB7OUT, KJ7PW, K7NZV, N7JCN, K7YHB, N7QYN, NG7Z, WA9ZSK, WB7AHT, KK7JE, KA7HVA, N7BYP, K7JVZ, N7EZU, WA7BVQ, WB0RAZ, N7PAW, N7EPR, KB7WCE, W6BFB, KD7MJP, KF6WZB, N7SOQ, WR5J, and EOC operators W7LSK, KB7ZQS, N7LGL, and N7LYE.



Photo by Paul Beringer NG7Z

WA9ZSK and WB7AHT at Sand Point.

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QRV?

QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

*QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle
Auxiliary Communication Service*

City of Seattle
Emergency Management

ACS Net & Disaster Coordination
Weekly Net, Mondays at 7:00 p.m.
146.96 MHz

ACS Primary Message Channels
441.80 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)
443.00 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)
443.65 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)

ACS 6 Meter Frequency
53.250 MHz (tone 100 Hz)

ACS Website
www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs

State & County Nets
Washington State Emergency
Mondays at 6:30 p.m.
Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.
3.985 MHz

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King County ARES
Sundays at 8:00 p.m.
146.82 MHz (tone 103.5)

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From the Editor

Looking to the Future

*Change is the law of life. And those who
look only to the past or the present are
certain to miss the future. – J. F. Kennedy*

Our organization has been in existence since 1996. Much has happened since we began as a service to the Seattle Disaster and Response Teams (SDART). Events such as WTO and the Nisqually Quake have challenged us to grow and serve our city in ways that go beyond service to SDART, important as that service is. We have conducted drills, meetings, participated in field days, and have established an annual communications academy to expand and refine our communications skills. Does service to SDART remain one of our priority missions? Of course, the answer is yes. Do we have additional missions? The answer to that is also yes. Those missions include the staffing of the Communications and Warning Center at the Seattle Emergency Operations Center and providing auxiliary communications services for city agencies. Will our mission(s) continue to evolve and change? Again, the answer is yes. But this raises new challenges for our organization.

How do we continue to improve our communications service to our neighbors, our city, our state, and our nation? Again, the answer is that we must continue to look ahead. If we concentrate only on the present and past we will, as President Kennedy suggested, miss the future. To remain viable our organization must continue to look to that future, to change, to develop new and better ways to serve. Jim Mullen's article, *From the EOC*, presents a helpful overview of challenges facing all who work in emergency management from local to national levels. Mark Sheppard's article, *Mark's Message*, while acknowledging and honoring the past, offers suggestions on how ACS can step up to meet new challenges as we go forward.

In the months ahead we will implement changes that will enable our organi-

From the EOC

By Jim Mullen, Director
Seattle Emergency Management

With the mid term elections over, and with events heating up all over the world, the impact of the war on terror will become more intense for all of us. I'll leave foreign policy commentary to others, but homeland security considerations are so much in our local domain that I think that some discussion about what may be happening in the next few months is in order.

You may be familiar with the move to create a cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security. This involves bringing a number (perhaps more than 170) existing federal agencies under one roof to facilitate coordination of their respective activities. It is, in part, an attempt to avoid some pre-9/11 communications breakdowns, but it has also been a proposal that has been kicking around for a number of years. It is taking shape, and given the election results sometime between now and the State of the Union Address in January 2003 a Department of Homeland Security will exist.

Usually when a major inter-departmental reorganization occurs, and this would be the largest one in history, I suspect, the bureaucracy spends two years "renewing itself" (figuratively speaking, having a cigarette). In short, nothing gets done because of the political and administrative energy that has to be consumed just to consummate the reorganization.

That won't be the case with this reorganization. There is simply too high an expectation from the general public, and the Congress, as well as within the Administration, for any type of gradual escalation of programs and efforts to secure this country from attack. We can expect a high volume of "instant" resources, some well targeted and some not so well targeted, and tight deadlines, some reasonable and some not so reasonable. We will need to participate in pressurized exercises, and simulations that others proscribe. We will also have to maintain our

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Mark's Message

By Mark Sheppard, N7LYE

Revitalization of Seattle ACS

Changing times requires that we take a new look at our team and finding ways to strengthen and build our vitality and readiness.

Background: What is ACS? History, Purpose, Mission?

The Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS) is the volunteer communications team sponsored by Seattle EOC. This team for the past eight years has been an important component of Seattle's plan for responding to and recovering from a large scale disaster or emergency. One of our priority missions is to provide communication links between SDART teams and the city by way of amateur radio. In times of disaster and failure of phones systems emergency requests for assistance and damage reporting in neighborhoods are transmitted by ACS. Our strategy has been to recruit and train amateur radio operator volunteers to report to the twenty three Park's Department Community Center facilities which will serve as communications hubs for runners from neighborhood SDART teams to bring first hand reports of the condition of neighborhoods in terms of injuries, damage and priority requests for assistance. In the event of catastrophic loss of our public communications infrastructure the SDART/ACS network will be the back-up to the 911 system.

The ACS mission also includes staffing of the EOC's communications and warning center. Volunteers have staffed this center around the clock during EOC activations. The center provides radio, phone, satellite communication network links with the community, city department operating center, state, county, local and federal agencies as well as monitoring of the EAS system. Recently, other city agencies and NOAA Weather Sand Point have requested ACS volunteers to staff essential communication posts.

Problem: membership has drastically decreased in recent years

The problem facing us is the reduction in the size of registered members. The number has dropped from 70 in 1999 to approximately 25 today. This fact significantly challenges and reduces ACS' ability to carry out its mission of providing 7x24 service at 23 community centers, government agencies and staff the EOC Communications and Warning Center in the event of a major disaster such as a large scale quake or terrorist attack.

The Cause? - There are several factors contributing to the reduction in membership:

- > Aging and attrition of members – We are all getting older, the average age of hams is moving into the senior quadrant of the age charts and ham radio's numbers are in generally diminished. Volunteer's interest change and they may find other places to invest their time and energies.
- > Post 9-11 security procedures prompting more rigorous investigation and screening of ACS volunteers – several chose not to deal with all the red-tape i.e. the imposition of submitting to police backgrounding, which requires coming downtown for finger printing and then coming down again for photographing for ID cards.
- > Competition for volunteer's interests and time – ACS volunteers are interested in contributing to their community and gaining the sense of satisfaction and of belonging to a corps of like minded individuals. They are finding other, more rewarding places to contribute their time.
- > Young people are not coming into our ranks – In general the amateur radio hobby is not attracting kids. The internet seems to offer more attraction.

What can we do?

The following are proposed actions, specific initiatives that will increase volunteer participation and satisfaction. *Note: we have discussed these with city OEM and they are quite supportive.*

1. **Create a two tiered system for volunteer registration and security.** Reduce the imposition on new members by requiring minimal background checking. Volunteers who will report to community centers or are assigned to non-secure posts, will complete a basic application, document their identity (DOL, Military, etc.) and agree to have their names run through local law enforcement record systems. No finger printing or FBI check required. These volunteers would receive a picture ID card clearly distinguished as a security level 1 (not permitted access to secure facilities such as the EOC). Those volunteers with access to the EOC, department operating centers or other secure areas would be required, as is the current practice, to undergo finger printing and a FBI records check and they would be issued a Photo ID card clearly marked as level 2 security.
2. **Build esprit de Corps for the ACS Team.** There are several things that can be done to increase the sense of satisfaction of being a member of the team that provides service to the community.
 - > Provide an ACS Communication Facility off-site from the EOC – This would serve as a Comm-center during an emergency to take some of the pressure off the EOC, which is very limited for space. Much of the call volume could be handled here and the essential messages forwarded to the EOC or appropriate agency. This facility would also serve as an office, club-amateur radio station and training center. We believe this would significantly contribute to both attracting new members as well as retention of existing members by demonstrating the value the city holds for its volunteers and providing a home for the organization to meet, train and participate in events outside the security zone of many city facilities. Space is available at Sand Point for a very small monthly rental fee.
 - > Provide volunteers with gear, signage and protective marked clothing for establishing communications posts at community

centers to collect and forward messages from the SDART teams. – This would include a minimal outlay of funds to provide volunteers with marked hardhat, cloth hat, shirt and vest along with flashlight and a large cloth sign to mark the location of the communications post. Additionally, tents, portable tables, generators and radio equipment should be purchased and cached at critical locations in the city for establishing these communication posts to support SDART and provide a backup for the 911 phone system.

3. Provide quality training of interest and relevance to the volunteers.

4. Effectively broaden the leadership of our organization – Ideas include implementation of a leadership board made up of representatives from across the organization to steer direction and activities. Broaden responsibilities of the Deputy RACES Officers and other officials of the organization to distribute responsibility and efforts. Additionally, more of the administrative work associated with registration, ID and record keeping will be moved to OEM staff. This should serve to help reduce the bottleneck effect, where too much goes through the ACS Manager.

5. Conduct outreach for recruitment – Work with local business and community groups to conduct a media campaign to educate and recruit.

6. Develop youth program – Look into working with schools as well as scouts to develop a communications program similar to Explorer Search and Rescue to attract, train and involve youth in this program as form of community service.

Status of these initiatives

1. Two tiered Security – This has been approved and we are in the process of implementing procedures. The overall ID process has been streamlined and the process that has taken months will now be completed in a just a few days.

2. Esprit de Corps

> Off-site ACS Comm-center Office – While OEM has been supportive, the overall city budget has been tight

and we are not sure when this will happen.

> Response kit for Community Center responder to support SDART/backup 911 – We have been told that even with current budget problems this will go through.

> Establish communications centers caches in four sectors of the city to hold tents, tables, office supplies, water and emergency food – as well as batteries, generators and radio equipment. – This is on hold due to budget constraints.

3. The remaining initiatives can be achieved without significant outlay of additional funds. An exception may be the youth program. We do not have adequate information to estimate youth program costs at this time.

4. I believe broadening our leadership will present the largest challenge.

We need to identify those in our community who want to step up and bring their ideas and energies to help bring this important program of ham radio into the new millennium. We need new strength and vitality to invigorate our leadership and future. ■■■■■■

Photos from November ACS Exercise and Meeting

Photos by Pete Smith N7BYP



N7LGL takes message at EOC



KD7QKK demos ready-kit



WB0RAZ & N7PAU at Magnolia



N7LYE prepares lunch

Personal Profile

Dave Holdsworth, KJ7PW

Remember when we activated for the Nisqually quake? If you recall that, you'll also know that the person who stepped up to serve as net control until net operations were established at the EOC was none other than the subject for this month's personal profile, Dave Holdsworth KJ7PW. Your editor recently had the pleasure of visiting Dave and his wife Joan at their QTH in the Sand Point area.

The first thing I noticed when I entered Dave's shack was a fascinating world map continuously updating and illuminating those parts of the world in daylight. In addition to the map, Dave's shack contains a comprehensive collection of HF, VHF, and UHF receivers, and transceivers along with other accessory goodies and a computer. As for antennas, Dave described one of the more elaborate stealth condominium antenna systems I've heard about. It includes an array of long wire, discone, verticals, and yagi antennas. Where are they? I won't tell but will say that they're invisible!

Dave traces his interest in radio back to childhood. His Dad was a ham and Dave grew up with radios around the house. Like many of us, myself included, Dave didn't actually receive his ham ticket until later in life. That's not to say he wasn't interested in radio. Dave used radio communications often as a marine salvage tugboat operator and also as a sheriff's deputy. It was back in 1993 that as he considered things undone, Dave realized he hadn't yet acquired that ham ticket. We all know the end of that story. Dave became licensed and now holds an Advanced class ticket. In addition to his amateur radio license

Dave also holds every commercial radio license available. Those wishing obtain a commercial radio license may very well may encounter Dave because he serves as the chief examiner for commercial licenses in our state.

It was fascinating to hear Dave tell of his vocational journey starting after college as an electronic engineer, then moving into plastics and fastener design, then serving as a sheriff's deputy, after that moving on to marine salvage operations, and finally becoming a marine surveyor. What is a marine surveyor? Dave described it as something like being a real estate appraiser, except that the focus is on recreational vessels. Dave determines risk factors and probable repair costs for clients considering the purchase of boats. In addition, he often serves as an expert witness in court cases involving boats.

Dave not only surveys boats, he has designed and built them! Back in 1978 he supervised a crew of 100 and built a "3 limit seiner," the largest vessel allowed to fish for salmon in Alaska. These versatile fishing boats are also used for crabbing. Speaking of design, Dave also designed various industrial processes including an innovative method for mass producing plastic parts and a creative technique for

attaching insulation in Boeing 747's that, by the way, has continued to be used for more than thirty years!

There's a personal reason for Dave's involvement in ACS. His daughter was visiting St. Croix when it was devastated by hurricane Hugo a few years ago. Dave received a brief telephone call informing him that his daughter was safe. That call, along with his law enforcement and marine salvage experiences, demonstrated the value and necessity of auxiliary radio communications in time of need. Not surprisingly, when he received his invitation from ACS, Dave joined immediately. In addition to his involvement in ACS, Dave holds a lifetime membership in the American Radio Relay League.

Photography is another interest that Dave pursues. Not only does he employ photography in his work as a marine surveyor, he is also an active nature photographer who has had a number of his photographs published. Like many of us who share photography interests, Dave is in the process of moving from conventional film to digital imaging. As eloquent testimony to his photographic skills I noticed a stunningly beautiful 360 degree scenic photograph that serves as Dave's computer screen saver.

I recall an occasion during our WTO deployment when Dave responded to a distress call at the EOC's Comm center. I was impressed with the professional and efficient manner with which he handled that potentially difficult call. That willingness to step forward and respond when needed was also evident during the first hours after the Nisqually quake when Dave assumed ACS net control. For these reasons and more, Dave is a positive credit to our organization and a model of a dedicated and public service oriented ham. ■■■■■



Photo by Pete Smith, N7BYP

Dave Holdsworth, KJ7PW

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own preferred level of readiness based upon our standards as a jurisdiction.

The irony that we must face is that we will see resources streaming in to deal with one type of hazard while at the same time on the local level it is possible that we will see the resources that we need being somewhat diminished by local budgetary constraints. This year, we in Emergency Management have been fortunate in that we have continued to have excellent support for the maintenance of our all hazards programs despite considerable budget pressures. But, maintenance is not expansion. Expanded roles are coming down to the local governments, and we have to be prepared to continue not only the all-hazards missions we have traditionally shouldered, but we also now have the terrorism component too.

There will be challenges galore in the coming months, and also opportunities. Please continue to work with us. No one can say for certain what lies ahead

for Seattle, or the rest of the country, but we can maintain our steady pace of development of the ACS model. As the holidays approach, let's be grateful that our joint efforts have positioned us to be able to take the next steps to protecting this community. Thank you so much for your willingness to continue to serve.

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zation to achieve new levels of service. We can be proud of our fine record of service to our city. We cannot, however, rest on that record. We must move thoughtfully ahead. Much depends on our ability to serve. We cannot afford to miss the future.

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October 5th ACS Meeting

The ACS autumn meeting was held Saturday, October 5, 2002, at the Training Room of the Seattle Public Utilities Operations Control Center. Approximately twenty five members attended. During the meeting photos were taken for ACS identification badges. Dave Prince, WB0RAZ, Dave Holdsworth, KJ7PW, and Jim Hicks, K7BDL described recent developments in the ACS club installation at the Sand Point NOAA facility. Paula Weir, KC7FAB, went over features of the ACS website, and Steve Monsey N0FPF led a discussion of the latest developments in packet radio, focusing on a new 9600 Kbps TCP/IP Packet System.

Mark Sheppard N7LYE gave a presentation that summarized the history, purpose and mission of ACS, then outlined a number of problems along with proposed actions to address those problems. Please refer to Mark's Message in this issue for details on his presentation and information about the current status of ACS and the various initiatives currently underway.

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